

# North Chicago VA News



VA Great Lakes  
Health Care System  
VISN 12

North Chicago  
VA Medical Center  
3001 Green Bay Road  
North Chicago, Illinois 60064

March 2004

## NewsBits



New Navy Barracks USS Arizona was dedicated on February 24, 2004

**\*Recovery Workshop:** Transition From Patienthood to Personhood will be presented Tuesday, April 20, 2004. This workshop is geared toward mental health providers, students/interns, outpatient consumers of mental health services and their family members. To register contact Shirley Hoffman or Linda Wheeler.

**\*Bring Your Child To Work** We wish to educate our children as to the important role each Mom and Dad contributes to the treatment of our Nation's veterans. Therefore, we encourage our Moms and Dads to bring their children to work on Thursday, April 22, 2004, for an inside experience of the VA family. If interested in participating in the event, please contact Nancy Gember at extension 83853, no later than April 16, 2004.

**\*Hospital Week** NCVA will be celebrating Hospital Week with a special Customer Service Kick-Off on May 11, 2004. Watch for fliers and the NCVA web for more information.

### North Chicago News

North Chicago News is published for staff and volunteers of the North Chicago VA Medical Center. Submissions can be sent to [douglas.shouse@med.va.gov](mailto:douglas.shouse@med.va.gov)  
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## New Associate Director for Facility Support Comes Home

Our new Associate Director for Facility Support is Marianne Semrad. For Marianne it is like coming home since she was born and raised in Waukegan, Illinois, and began her VA career at North Chicago in 1986 as Staff Assistant for Planning and Program Development. In 1987, Marianne became the Executive Staff Assistant to the Director and then in 1990 she was selected for the Associate Director Training Program. After completing the program, Marianne had several positions at Milwaukee VAMC, including Associate Director for Support Services and Associate Director for Managed Care. Marianne was also the Director of the VISN 12 Business Development Office from 1998 - 2001. Before arriving at North Chicago, she was the Associate Director at Hines VA.

Marianne has been involved in numerous community activities, including the Lake County Chamber of Commerce and Gurnee Breakfast Exchange Club. She has also served as member of the Lake County Advisory Board for Mental Health, Substance Abuse and Developmental Disabilities, and was a member of the Lake County United Way Board of Directors.

Marianne has been involved in several



VA committees including: Chairman of the VISN 12 CARES Implementation Task Force; VA Representative to the VA/DOD Long Range Planning Task Force for the Great Lakes Naval Hospital, and VISN 12 Task Forces on Business Office Functions, Dental, Dietetics, Prosthetics and Non-VA Care (Chairman). She currently serves on the VISN 12 Finance Council and Position Management Committee.

Marianne graduated from the University of Illinois in Champaign, Illinois, with a Bachelor's in Sociology and a Master's in Social

Work. She is a graduate of Leadership VA and the VA's Healthcare Leadership Institute.

Marianne presently lives in Gurnee, Illinois with her husband Ed.





# Deputy Secretary Mansfield Visits Veterans & Staff

On Thursday, March 4, Deputy Secretary of VA Gordon H. Mansfield visited the medical center. He attended the American College of Healthcare Executives VA Day earlier in the morning in Chicago, before visiting North Chicago.

Mr. Sullivan, Medical Center Director provided a briefing for the Deputy Secretary and then he toured several areas, including the Drug Dependency Unit, Surgery, ICU, Rehab, AEU & the Clinic Areas. Deputy Secretary Mansfield was very impressed with the facility and the staff. His main focus was to thank the employees for the excellent job they do in caring for the nation's veterans and to assure veterans that VA is here to serve them.

Deputy Secretary Mansfield was nominated to serve as Deputy Secretary by President George W. Bush on November 3, 2003, and confirmed by the Senate on January 22, 2004. He previously served as

VA Assistant Secretary for Congressional and Legislative Affairs since August 1, 2001.

Prior to his appointment, Deputy Secretary Mansfield served as the legislative advisor to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and was responsible for VA's Congressional relations and for representing VA programs, policies, investigations and legislative agenda to Congress.

Prior to joining VA, Deputy Secretary Mansfield served as executive director of the Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) since April 1993. In that position, the highly decorated Vietnam veteran oversaw daily operation of PVA's national office in Washington, D.C. Deputy Secretary Mansfield held a number of positions at PVA from 1981 to 1989, and served as the organization's first associate executive director of Government Relations.

Deputy Secretary Mansfield received his undergraduate degree from Villanova University and law degree from the University of Miami. Following his 1964 enlistment in the Army, he served two tours



of duty in Vietnam. While serving as company commander with the 101st Airborne Division during his second tour, he was wounded during the Tet Offensive of 1968 sustaining a spinal cord injury. For his actions while his unit was under fire, he was decorated with the Distinguished Service Cross. He was medically retired by the U.S. Army at the grade of Captain. His other combat decorations include the Bronze Star, two Purple Hearts, the Combat Infantryman's Badge and the Presidential Unit Citation.

Deputy Secretary Mansfield also is a recipient of the Presidential Distinguished Service Award and the Villanova University Alumni Human Relations Medal. He was inducted into the U.S. Army Officer Candidate School Hall of Fame in 1997.

As Deputy Secretary Mansfield was leaving, he promised to be back in the near future to visit again.



# Central Region Deputy Field Director for Women's Health Visits North Chicago VA



*From left: Julie Wright, Women Veteran Program Manager Trainee Iron Mt VA; Jill Feldman, Women Veterans Program Manager, VA Chicago; Connie LaRosa, Deputy Field Director for Women's Health; Katherine Dong, North Chicago Women Veterans Program Manager; Anne Starr, Women Veterans Program Manager, Iron Mt VA; Pat Hagerbaumer, Women Veterans Coordinator, Evanston Vet Center*

Connie LaRosa, the Central Region Deputy Field Director for Women's Health, paid a visit to the North Chicago VA on March 9, 2004. The purpose of the visit was twofold. First, Ms. LaRosa and Katherine Dong, the North Chicago VA Women Veterans Program Manager, were

conducting an orientation for two newly appointed Women Veterans Program Managers in the VISN. Secondly, Ms. LaRosa also conducted a site visit to assess how health care services are provided to women veterans at the North Chicago VA.

Ms. LaRosa was highly complimentary of the care provided to women veterans by both the Women's Wellness Clinic and the Women Veterans Stress Disorder Treatment Program. Ms. LaRosa specifically mentioned the growth in the number of women veterans served by the Women's Wellness Clinic and the

corresponding measures taken by the medical center to increase clinic availability. Ms. LaRosa stated that there are currently 1.4 million women veterans in the United States and that currently 16 percent of military members are women. Ms. LaRosa congratulated the providers of women's health for being proactive and planning to assure equitable health care services and benefits are available for women veterans now and in the future.

Notable accomplishments of the North Chicago VA Women's program that were highlighted during this visit included: consistently high scores on performance measures examining compliance with recommended cervical and breast cancer screenings; adherence to all VA privacy standards; implementation of a treatment program for women who have experienced sexual trauma during their military service; and presence of an active Women Veterans' Committee.



# African-American History Month

Several activities were held throughout the month of February to celebrate African-American History Month. On February 5, the Massi Exhibit was on display in the Atrium. The exhibit, Chapungu: Custom & Legend, A Culture in Stone was on display on February 11. The Masks of Africa was displayed in Bourke Hall on February 17. The grand finale to the month long celebration was held on February 27 in Bourke Hall. The program included a fashion show, a musical performance by the Grana' Louise Blues Band, and an abundance of African-American cuisine. The fashion models did a great job, modeling a variety of clothing from



From left: Denise Lear, Archie Wall, Committee Chairperson, Grana' Louise, Patrick Sullivan, Medical Center Director.

Left: Ernestine Holmon in one of her beautiful outfits.

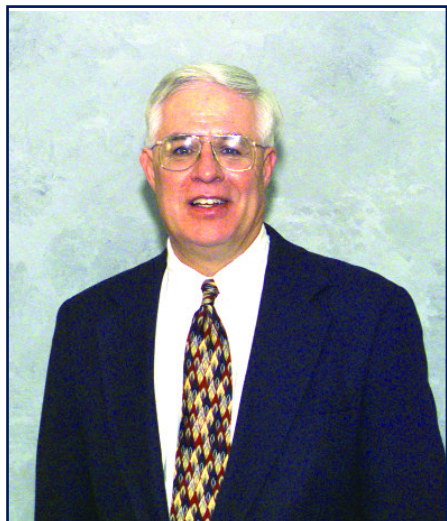


Valerina Robinson comments on the Massi sculpture exhibit with Archie Wall



lounge wear to wedding attire. The musicians of the band received a standing ovation for their fantastic performance. A special thank you to Archie Wall, Chairperson, and his committee members: Doris Freeman, Ernestine Holmon, Denise Lear, Charles Mims, and Diana Payne.

## NCVA Welcomes New Chaplain



Lyle Swanson was born and raised in Northwest Iowa. There his parents taught him the value of loving God, family and country. He chose to attend Nebraska Christian College where he met his wife Donna. Lyle received his Bachelor of Arts Ministerial Degree from Nebraska. After graduation, Lyle, Donna and their son Joel moved to Sidney Illinois where Lyle served as minister for the Sidney Christian Church. During this time he finished his Master of Divinity Degree at Lincoln Christian Seminary and their second son, Kyle was born.

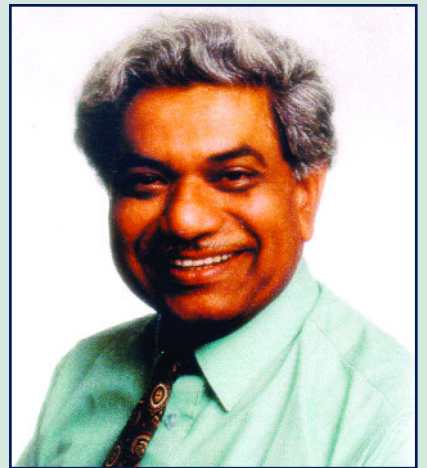
Soon after graduation from Lincoln, Lyle was commissioned as an active duty chaplain in the United States

Navy and was stationed at the Marine Corps Air Station in Yuma, Arizona. Subsequent duty stations included: Commander Destroyer Squadron 33, Pearl Harbor, HI; Naval Air Station, Glenview IL; Post-graduate training at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL (received a Master of Theology in Mission and Evangelism); Administrative Support Unit, Southwest Asia, Bahrain and the Naval Training Center, Great Lakes IL.

Upon retirement from the Navy, Lyle assumed the duties of Director of Admissions at Lincoln Christian Seminary. After almost seven years at Lincoln Christian Seminary, Lyle accepted his new position as Protestant Chaplain with the North Chicago VA.

Donna, also a Master of Divinity graduate from Lincoln Christian Seminary, is a Pastoral Psychotherapist. Joel is an MBA graduate from the Kelley School of Business at Indiana University and is currently living in Zurich, Switzerland with his wife Andrea. Kyle is a BA graduate of the Kelley School and currently lives in Lincoln Park. Lyle enjoys any outdoor activities such as walking, hiking backpacking, tennis, golfing, bird watching and occasionally jogging.

## Loss of Co-Worker and Friend



On February 22, 2004, Hanumant G. Deshmukh, M.D., passed away while on vacation. Dr. Deshmukh served many years as the Chief of Cardiology. He was a dedicated physician and provided excellent care to his patients. He was a mentor, a friend and a father figure for many of our staff. Dr. Deshmukh was a loyal husband and family man whose goal in life was to provide his children with a high level of education.

The loss of Dr. Deshmukh will be felt for a long time, especially by his patients and of course, his fellow employees.





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# SEDOL Students Receive CPR Training



The North Chicago VA reaches out to SEDOL students with a modified

CPR training course. Virginia Peer, RN, CPR, and ACLS Coordinator explored the possibility of providing a modified CPR course for the SEDOL students who annually receive prevocational training at our medical center. SEDOL and the VA have maintained this training program for 24 consecutive years, but many of these students with special needs had not previously benefited from a CPR class. This represents a real first for both SEDOL students and the VAMC. Virginia worked closely with SEDOL's on-site job coaches, Dave Warstler and Carolynn Burke, to present a course which would provide an adequate level of training as well as presentations of modified CPR course certificates. Virginia and

her assistants presented the course in a split session, starting with one-half of the students on February 5th and ending the 19th. The Special Education District of Lake County (SEDOL) was notified in advance through the students' prevocational coordinators, and they were most receptive and appreciative of the VA's offering. The students offered many positive comments following the training and receipt of their certificates. They proudly departed with their certificates, undoubtedly anxious to share them with parents, guardians, and teachers. Thanks to Virginia Peer for her vision, the course assistants for their support, and Sedol for approving this most worthwhile venture.

## VETERANS STORIES: World War II Service In The Pacific

This story is received from Nacy Romano, Fox Lake American Legion Post 702 and VFW Fox Lake Memorial Post 9655 Service Officer:

I was drafted into the Navy on December, 27, 1943. I was 17 years of age. I took my basic training at Great Lakes Naval Training Station then assigned to the USS Wisconsin in 1944 and took her on her shake down course to Cuba, then to the Pacific, and then to war. The USS Wisconsin was in 7 bombardments of Islands in the Pacific from the Philippines to the Island of Japan, and shot down or assisted in downing seven enemy aircraft.

My job on the USS Wisconsin was to help keep the boilers in good operating condition at all times. We had 8 boilers and maintained 600 pounds of super steam pressure maintained for emergency speed when needed. Our mission was to protect our carriers from enemy air craft and to search out enemy ships.

Our task was to seek out the Japanese fleet and destroy it. We were steaming at flank speed when general quarters sounded over our PA system, enemy aircraft approaching. In a short while, there was a sky full of Japanese kamikaze bombers and fighter planes. You only have three minutes or less to be at your

battle station, because all the hatches are batten down tight behind you.

We had a long battle ahead of us because they had the same gut feeling we did--destroy the enemy. We could see the faces of the Japanese pilots as they came flying low between our ship and the aircraft carrier next to us, seeking to un-load his bombs from his wings.

Our biggest scare of this conflict came when a betty kamikaze (Japanese bomber) was flying just off the top of the waves coming in at our fan tail with the hope of blowing off the back of our battleship. One of our pilots flying a Navy corsair was on the tail of this kamikaze, with all his guns aimed at his prey. This Marine pilot was also in the red zone which means his plane could be shot down by friendly fire if he stayed on the same course of the Japanese bomber. This Marine did his job by downing the enemy, he choose to 'risk his own life to save the crew of the USS Wisconsin

What an inspiring story. It makes you truly appreciate everything our veterans did for us to keep us safe. Thank you for your service and sharing this story!

## Adopt - A - Vet Valentine Program



A Pre-Valentine's Day Luncheon was held on February 13, 2004 for the Adopt - A - Vet program participants. The Adopt-A-Vet Program was formally initiated on Valentine's Day in 1994. The Program matches veterans assigned with Skilled Geriatric Care (Building 134) with employees of the North Chicago VA Medical Center. The employees are volunteers who spend time with their chosen veteran. Many choose more than one veteran at a time, some an entire ward. The time spent with the veteran could be: reading to them, playing cards, checkers, chess, taking them for walks, having lunch or even feeding those who need assistance.

Lolita Shelton